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ABSTRACT

This book sets forth the historic obstacles to the unionization of public school teachers, shows how difficult organization was, and illustrates the contradictions faced by public employees in unionization. The book is organized chronologically, beginning with the centralization of school life at the turn of the century and the emergence of early teacher unions in opposition to centralization and professionalism. The first five chapters outline the original rivalry between the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) through World War I. Subsequent chapters cover the AFT's struggles with the American Federation of Labor in the interwar years, the growth of radical factions within the AFT, the era of McCarthyism and its effects on the union, the history of civil rights and its impact on education in the late fifties and the early sixties, the events of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy and the conflict over race and class in the teachers' union, and competition between the AFT and the NEA in the drive for collective bargaining. The book also attempts to explain why the union and the association seem to have switched political positions, with the union being an agent of conservative thinking and the association embracing the most progressive causes. (JDD)

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